the NPS III, the movement of urea will be monitored throughout the country by an on-line web based monitoring system. The subsidy on urea will be paid only when urea reaches the district. Further, the Department will ensure pre-positioning of urea in each district in adequate quantities to obviate the possibility of shortages and is also mandated to operate a buffer stock through the State Institutional Agencies/fertilizer companies. Further, the freight reimbursement to urea units will now be on actual rail and road leads and will help in ensuring availability of urea in all parts of the country.

As far as decontrolled Phosphatic and Potassic fertilizers are concerned, subsidy is released on sale of fertilizers. The responsibility of meeting the full requirement of decontrolled fertilizers in any State is with the concerned State Governments. State Governments have been advised to identify at least one State Institutional Agency, which would deal with the required quantities of decontrolled fertilizers. Buffer stocking of decontrolled fertilizers by the Government of India would be made only to meet any emergent requirement.

Closed pharma units

3228. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of pharma industries closed during the last three years, State-wise;

(b) whether this has adversely affected the availability of cheaper drugs and medicines for common man in the country; and

(c) what steps Government have taken to overcome the crisis in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has reported that information about closure of Pharma units State-wise is not centrally maintained. However, Pharma companies, including SSI units are required to company with the requirements of Schedule 'M' of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 with effect from 1st July, 2005.

(b) No adverse effect on availability of cheaper drugs and medicines for common man in the country has come to the notice of this Department.

(c) In view of above, does not arise.

Custom duty on import of RBD

3229. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) in view of the unprecedented rise in edible oil prices compared to that of last year, whether Government would exempt custom duty on import of RBD Palmoline Oil;

(b) if not, whether Government propose to reduce the custom duty by 40 to 50 per cent; and

(c) whether it is a fact that Government of Gujarat desires to import approximately 6000 to 7000 MTs of RBD Palmoline Oil for distribution of the same during Janmashtami and Diwali festivals to Antyodaya and BPL card holders at subsidized rates; if so, whether Government would exempt or reduce custom duty on the same as a special case?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government, considering the present trend in prices of edible oils, have reduced the import duty on RBD Palmolien from 67.5% to 57.5% *w.e.f.* 13.4.2007.

(c) The import of edible oils (except Coconut Oil) is under Open General Licence (OGL) and there is no import allocation from Central Government. The State Government is at liberty to import edible oil according to their requirements.

Rise in prices of pulses

3230. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been seized of the steep rise in the prices of pulses during the last two years;

(b) the details of prices as prevailed since January, 2004, month-wise;

(c) the details of estimated volume of demand of pulses *vis-a-vis* supplies during the period;